

# The National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)

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## **DANTES Test Centers' Authorization**

The National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) authorizes military installations with DANTES test centers to administer the Certified Legal Assistant (CLA) certification examination to uniformed military personnel.

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## **Background**

NALA is the leading professional association for legal assistants and provides continuing education and professional certification programs for paralegals. Incorporated in 1975, NALA is an integral part of the legal community, working to improve the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of legal services.

Established in 1976, the CLA program has enabled the profession to develop a strong and responsive self-regulatory program offering a nationwide credential for legal assistants. Use of the CLA credential signifies that a legal assistant is capable of providing superior services to firms and corporations.

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## **Address**

**NALA**  
**1516 S. Boston, Suite 200**  
**Tulsa, OK 74119**

**Phone: (918) 587-6828**  
**Fax: (918) 582-6772**  
**E-mail: [nalanet@nala.org](mailto:nalanet@nala.org)**

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## Description

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### **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible to sit for the CLA examination, a legal assistant must meet one of the following requirements:

1. Graduation from a legal assistant program that is:
  - Approved by the American Bar Association; or
  - An associate degree program; or
  - A post-baccalaureate certificate program in legal assistant studies; or
  - A bachelor's degree program in legal assistant studies; or
  - A legal assistant program which consists of a minimum of 60 semester hours (900 clock hours or 90 quarter hours) of which at least 15 semester hours (225 clock hours or 22.5 quarter hours) are substantive legal courses.
2. A bachelor's degree in any field plus one year's experience as a legal Assistant. Successful completion of at least 15 semester hours (or 22.5 quarter hours or 225 clock hours) of substantive legal assistant courses will be considered equivalent to one year's experience as a legal assistant.
3. A high school diploma or equivalent plus seven year's experience as a legal assistant under the supervision of a member of the Bar, plus evidence of a minimum of twenty hours of continuing legal education credit that has been completed within a two-year period prior to the examination date.

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## Description, Continued

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**CLA Exam  
Structure**

The CLA exam is a two-day comprehensive examination based on federal law and procedure. The major subject areas of the exam are:

- Communications
- Ethics
- Legal Research
- Human Relations and Interviewing Techniques
- Judgment and Analytical Ability
- Legal Terminology

Substantive Law – This section consists of five mini-examinations covering the American Legal System and four of the areas listed below as selected by the examinee:

- Administrative Law
- Bankruptcy
- Business Organizations/Corporations
- Contracts
- Family Law
- Criminal Law and Procedure
- Litigation
- Probate and Estate Planning
- Real Estate

**NOTE: Effective with the July 2001 testing session, the Human Relations and Interviewing Techniques questions are combined with the Communications and Ethics sections. Questions from the Legal Terminology section is included in the Substantive Law Sections. Visit NALA's web site for more information at [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org).**

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## Description, Continued

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### CLA Specialty Examinations (CLAS)

Those who have achieved the CLA credential may seek advanced certification in specialty practice areas. Specialty certification examinations are available in the areas of Bankruptcy, Civil Litigation, Corporations/Business Law, Criminal Law and Procedure, Intellectual Property, Estate Planning and Probate, and Real Estate Planning.

Each of these is a four-hour examination written to test specialized knowledge of the practice area.

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## How to Obtain an Application

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### Applications

Download the application form from NALA's web site at [www.nala.org/cert.htm](http://www.nala.org/cert.htm). The applicant or an authorized DANTES Test Control Officer (TCO) should mail the completed application signed by the applicant, accompanied by a letter on command letterhead from the TCO stating he or she will administer the exam.

Applications must be postmarked by 15 January for the March examination, 15 May for the July session, and 1 October for the December session.

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## Certification Fees

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### Certification Fees

Payment must be submitted with the application by either certified check, money order, firm check, Master Card, Discover, American Express, or VISA in the amount of \$225 for NALA members or \$250 for non-NALA members.

Applications mailed less than ten working days after the deadline require a \$25 nonrefundable late fee submitted with the application.

**NOTE: Applications mailed after the ten working day grace period will not be accepted.**

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## Cancellation and Refund Policy

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### Cancellation and Refunds

If an applicant must withdraw the application or the application is incomplete or rejected, payment will be refunded less a \$25 processing fee (and late fee if applicable) up to ten working days prior to the test date.

Request for withdrawals postmarked within ten or fewer working days before the test date will be subject to a \$75 processing fee.

Applicants who do not appear at the testing center due to an emergency must call NALA Headquarters by the day of the examination. A letter must be submitted to NALA Headquarters stating reasons for not appearing within 5 days after the examination in order to be eligible for a partial refund (examination fee less \$75 processing charge).

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## Testing Session Transfer and Retakes

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### Transfer

Applicants are eligible to transfer from one testing session to another upon payment of a \$50 nonrefundable transfer fee. Applications may be transferred a maximum of three times within 12 months of the application date.

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### Examination Retake

Applicants are eligible to retake sections of the examination at costs of \$50 per section. Applicants in retake status may attend a maximum of five retake sessions within a three-year period and will be allowed to choose which sections will be retaken during any retake session.

**NOTE: The examination must be successfully completed within five retake sessions in a three-year period, or credit for all passed sections will be forfeited.**

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## Administration

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### **Military Administration**

**DANTES TEST CENTERS MAY ADMINISTER THE CLA CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION TO ELIGIBLE ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY AND RESERVE COMPONENT PERSONNEL ON AN UNFUNDED (EXAMINEE PAYS) BASIS UNLESS MILITARY REGULATIONS PROVIDE OTHERWISE.**

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### **Civilian Administration**

DANTES test centers may administer the CLA certification examinations to the following civilians on an **UNFUNDED (EXAMINEE PAYS) AND SPACE-AVAILABLE BASIS** according to local command policy and Service regulations:

- Retired military personnel
  - Military family members
  - Veterans, and
  - U.S. federal employees
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## Maintaining Professional Certification

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### **Recertification**

The CLA credential is awarded for five years. To maintain CLA status, legal assistants must submit proof of participation in a minimum of 50 hours of continuing legal education programs or individual study programs.

Credit is also awarded for significant achievement in the area of continuing legal assistant education such as successful completion of a state certification test, completion of a CLA Specialty examination, or teaching in a legal assistant program.

**NOTE: Visit NALA's web site for detailed information about the requirements and to download a Certificate of Attendance Form.**

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## Problems

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**Problems** If information pertaining to the examination is not received in a timely manner or if you have questions, please call (918) 587-6828.

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## Examination Preparation

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**Study Materials** Applicants can order study references on-line. Visit NALA's website at [www.nala.org/cert.htm#study%20Materials](http://www.nala.org/cert.htm#study%20Materials), and click on "Study Materials."

Examination preparation seminars for selected topics are also available on-line at [www.nalacampus.com](http://www.nalacampus.com). Please visit this site for more details.

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## Security

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**Test Loss or Compromise** Refer to Part I of the *DANTES Examination Program Handbook (DEPH)* for complete instructions if there is a NALA test loss or compromise.

Contact DANTES immediately and refer to specific Service regulations for complete instructions if there is a CLA test loss or compromise.  
DANTES address is:

**DANTES  
Code 20 F  
6490 Saufley Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32509-5243**

**Phone: (850) 452-1360  
DSN: 922-1360  
Fax: (850) 452-1161**

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## Approved for Veterans Reimbursement

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| <b>MGIB Reimbursement</b> | Eligible veterans may obtain reimbursement from the Department of Veterans Affairs for the costs of taking the CLA examination. Additional information about this program may be found on the VA's website at <a href="http://www.gibill.va.gov/education">www.gibill.va.gov/education</a> . |
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## Official Source of Information

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| <b>NALA Certification Examination</b> | The NALA website is the official source of data about the CLA certification examination, to include information about their costs, the qualifications of individuals who may hold these certifications, and any other information pertaining to the credential. |
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## Web Pages and E-mail Addresses

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| <b>DANTES Web Address</b> | Access the DANTES web pages at <a href="http://www.dantes.doded.mil">http://www.dantes.doded.mil</a> . |
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| <b>NALA Web Address</b> | Access the NALA web page at <a href="http://www.nala.org">www.nala.org</a> . |
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| <b>DANTES E-mail Address</b> | The DANTES Certification Program E-mail address is <a href="mailto:certprog@voled.doded.mil">certprog@voled.doded.mil</a> . |
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